

States and the Philippines together remain committed to democracy, human rights, and self-determination.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF JERRY LEE LOUPEE

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of my friend, Mr. Jerry Lee Loupee, who passed away on May 28 at the age of 83.

During my time being involved in politics in Chatham County, I got to know Jerry Loupee. I got to know him and his wife, Bonnie, because they were stalwarts. They were strong supporters of the Republican Party.

Jerry was an integral part of the Skidaway Island Republican Club, the Chatham County Republican Party, and many charitable organizations around the world, always striving to make the world a better place to live.

Jerry said: "If you teach your children compassion, you have done half the job of raising them right."

At home, he served to protect Georgia through the Georgia State Defense Force. Abroad, he worked for 31 years for Hercules Inc. in Pakistan, Taiwan, and Thailand, before coming back to his home in Savannah.

Recently, Jerry and Bonnie had moved back to their home in Iowa. My wife, Amy, and I had the opportunity to visit with them before they moved. I am glad we had that final opportunity to be with Jerry.

Bonnie, please know that we love you very much, and we share with you in the celebration of Jerry's life. Jerry was a true friend to many in Savannah and around the world, and he truly will be missed.

NORTH KOREA SUMMIT

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, just 6 months ago, my constituents and people all across Hawaii received a harrowing alert that came across their cell phones saying that a ballistic missile was incoming and to take cover immediately.

It turned out to be a false alarm, but the terror that my family, friends, people all across the State of Hawaii experienced was very real, shining a light on the stark reality and the seriousness of the North Korean nuclear threat that hangs over them and this country.

The agreement that came from the U.S.-North Korea summit that just concluded late last night, committing North Korea to complete denuclearization, is a first step, but there is far more work to be done. We have to be vigilant to make sure that the details of this deal ensure complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of North Korea.

You hear talking heads on TV talking about who put up more points on the scoreboard, missing the seriousness and the actual point of what we are dealing with, that this is not a game. There are lives at stake.

In the interest of peace and humanity, we should all be rallying around our country's success and continuing to pursue diplomacy and peace to remove this threat and denuclearize North Korea.

HONORING THE VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Vegas Golden Knights for their monumental accomplishments this past season.

Mr. Speaker, who knew there would ever be a winning hockey team in the desert? Never underestimate the people of Las Vegas and the State of Nevada.

The story of the Vegas Golden Knights is truly inspiring and symbolic of the strength and perseverance and unity in the Las Vegas community.

Following the October 1 shooting, a unique bond was created between Nevadans and the Golden Knights that helped mend a city that was torn apart by a devastating massacre. The community rallied around a hockey team made up of players from teams around the country. They called them the "Golden Misfits."

These players fostered relationships that led to a magical season that will never ever be forgotten. The Golden Knights set an NHL record for an expansion team with 51 wins, along with a trip to the Stanley Cup finals.

I would like to congratulate and thank the owners, the players, the coaches, and the fans, as well as the Washington Capitals on their first Stanley Cup championship.

Mr. Speaker, Las Vegas and the Golden Knights will always be Vegas born, Vegas strong. Go Knights go.

□ 1930

2-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF PULSE NIGHTCLUB SHOOTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, today marks 2 years since the Pulse shooting. Tonight, my colleague Congressman SOTO and I stand on the floor of the United States House of Representatives to honor and remember the victims of that horrible night.

The Pulse attack was the second worst mass shooting marring American history, the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11, and the worst attack against the LGBTQ population in our history.

This evening, in our hometown of Orlando, thousands of people are gathered, like they were 1 year ago and 1 year after that. They gather to mourn, to honor, and to pay tribute to the 49 lives we lost on June 12, 2016, just as we do here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could be there with my friends, neighbors, and loved ones in Orlando, but I felt it was important to be here, fulfilling our duty as Members of Congress. We stand here tonight on the floor of the House of Representatives so that the world will not forget the lives we lost in the Pulse nightclub shooting.

This month, we are celebrating Pride Month. June 1 was Gun Violence Awareness Day. For the men and women at Pulse 2 years ago, the nightclub was a refuge. It was a haven for our LGBTQ community and their friends; and particularly, it was Latin Night, and they gathered to celebrate. It was a place where, my bishop likes to say, they were there for a late night fellowship.

This is what I want to emphasize. The victims at Pulse, like every other mass shooting, were not in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were living their lives, taking refuge in song, dance, joy, and celebrating their common humanity at a time when the common humanity of LGBTQ Americans was not, and it is still not, universally recognized in our country.

It was supposed to be, Mr. Speaker, like any other Saturday night for the men and women inside the Pulse nightclub. It was about 2:02 a.m., when everyone was closing their tabs for the night and about to head home. That is when an ISIS-inspired gunman walked into the club with an assault rifle and a handgun. Within a few minutes, he killed 49 people and wounded 53 others.

The innocent men and women in the club didn't stand a chance against the gunman. We will return to that point later. The fact is that the weapons available to this gunman made his attack, in many instances, as bad as a battlefield.

Orlando lost 49 lives that night; we lost 49 lives that night. Many others have had their lives changed forever. But after the attack, we saw our community come together. We donated blood together. We raised money together, and we mourned and grieved together. Mr. Speaker, tonight we continue to mourn, and we continue to grieve.

Together with my colleague, Congressman DARREN SOTO, we want to remember the victims, tell their stories, and celebrate the lives we lost 2 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), my colleague, whom I am absolutely honored to serve with.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman DEMINGS. I thank her for her service in law enforcement. I know she can view this at a level that some of us who have never witnessed this type of tragedy, never felt this type of tragedy—she has an understanding of it that I am grateful for her imparting to me.

As someone who was a State legislator and a lawyer, I have never seen this kind of tragedy up close. And even still to this day, as we remember these 49 souls, these 49 angels whom we lost and the 68 injured 2 years ago at the Pulse nightclub tragedy in Orlando, we still, as a community, are trying to understand this carnage, this loss, this tragedy. Our hearts still ache, Mr. Speaker.

This was the single deadliest known violent attack on the LGBTQ community, an attack on our Latino community, an attack on our African American community, and an attack on the whole Orlando community. Until last September, it was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. Mr. Speaker, they have gotten even deadlier, with Las Vegas just recently.

Yet our community showed its resiliency and strength in the face of diversity. Orlando Strong is more than just a hashtag; it is our commitment to pledge to stand up to hate and to gun violence. Since then, Floridians stand stronger than ever.

Over the past 2 days, I have had the honor of attending events with Congresswoman MURPHY, Congresswoman DEMINGS, and Congressman MARK TAKANO, co-chair of the LGBT Congressional Caucus. We had an LGBTQ roundtable with local groups. We visited the Pulse Memorial. We helped hand out scholarships under the 49 Fund Scholarship Ceremony. We toured The LGBT Center. We went to a rally on action for gun violence. We went to the Orange County History Museum to see the history of those days, and I joined with Congresswoman VAL DEMINGS, my colleague here today, to hear the 49 church bells ring for the 49 victims at the First United Methodist Church in downtown Orlando.

Today, we honor the 49 lives taken by displaying love, acceptance, and kindness. But, most importantly, we honor them with action. That has been the theme over the last couple of days: we honor them with action.

I would like to recognize and focus my comments, in large part tonight, on following local groups and survivors in central Florida who, 2 years later, continue to transform their grief and mourning into positive change for all.

We cannot change the tragedy that happened. We cannot change the past.

We cannot bring back those 49 angels whom we lost, but we can give meaning to this great tragedy through action to make sure these types of shootings no longer are commonplace in our society. We honor them with action.

First, I would like to talk about Brandon Wolf. Brandon, a native of Oregon, was one of the survivors during the Pulse nightclub shooting on June 12, 2 years ago today.

Brandon moved to Orlando in 2008, after attending the University of Oregon Political Science School. He now lives in Tallahassee, where he has become a leading activist in LGBTQ issues in minority youth.

After the shooting, Brandon and his friends launched The Dru Project, named after Drew Leinonen, an LGBTQ nonprofit organization on a mission to spread love across the Nation. I got to meet with Drew's mother this past week at our LGBT roundtable, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a little while.

The advocacy group sponsors gay-straight alliances in public schools and offers scholarships to help send future leaders to college. In August of last year, Brandon joined the board of advisers for a political action committee dedicated to ending gun violence.

Following the Pulse tragedy, Brandon was inspired by Drew's words: "We never say I love you enough." He travels the Nation speaking on behalf of LGBTQ youth—education, common-sense gun legislation, and the future of intersectionality are some of the topics he discusses—spreading the message of unconditional love and inclusion.

I attended the Pulse rally to honor them with action yesterday, organized by Brandon at Orlando City Hall, an amazing event that I will talk a little bit more about tonight.

Another call for action, to honor them with action was the onePULSE Foundation. The onePULSE Foundation was established by the owners of Pulse nightclub, including Barbara Poma, to create a sanctuary of hope following the shooting.

The foundation supports the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of a memorial and museum to remember the Pulse nightclub shooting. They also work towards giving out community grants to care for the victims' families and the survivors.

The foundation has currently established an interim memorial, which serves as a sanctuary of quiet reflection and love, dedicated to honoring the senseless loss of innocent life. There is hope to create an official permanent museum in the future, something that I look forward to working on with my colleagues, Congresswoman DEMINGS and Congresswoman MURPHY.

The onePULSE Foundation is also creating annual 49 individual college scholarships named in honor of each victim and designed for their specific vocations, hobbies, or life aspirations. Through their work, the onePULSE Foundation makes sure that the names

and legacies of each of the victims, the 49 victims, these angels whom we lost that night, live on and are never forgotten.

I would also like to talk about our Q-LatinX community. LatinX is a term referring to our younger, next generation of our Latin community. In fact, many of our more senior Hispanics think: What the heck are these crazy kids talking about with LatinX? It is a self-styling of folks who are Millennials and who are Generation X who are Latin.

It is amazing that this name has come into the common nomenclature now, really amazing, and a testament to this kind of intersectionality that we saw that night, that we lost so much of, that is now being highlighted as a result.

Q-LatinX was founded in response to the mass shooting and active hate that occurred on June 12, 2 years ago today, at the Pulse nightclub. Its mission is to bring together and empower the most marginalized members of our community, establish affirming and supportive healing relationships and spaces, build a strong and united community, and work towards a society free of fear, violence, and hate.

Through their program of social justice education, they built a supportive infrastructure, addressing inequity and promoting inclusionary practices for local leadership and partnership agencies.

Q-LatinX strives to give a voice to the community. Through their immigration committee and HIV prevention education committee, Q-LatinX makes sure to prioritize issues that affect both the LGBTQ and Latino communities.

□ 1945

But it gets at this bigger issue of intersectionality.

I know when you look at our 49 victims, just like the rainbow flag that honors our LGBTQ community, it is a rainbow of individuals, a rainbow of backgrounds, and it is symbolic of the intersectionality of Orlando, an area that Congresswomen DEMINGS and MURPHY have the honor of representing with me. I am proud of that diversity, and I know Congresswoman DEMINGS and Congresswoman MURPHY are proud of that diversity.

Mr. Speaker, I want to now give Congresswoman DEMINGS the opportunity to continue her impressions on both intersectionality, gun violence, and so many other issues that I know that we will be addressing tonight.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman SOTO as he talked about the advocacy that we have seen in the place that we call home, the place that we love in Orlando.

It is amazing how, out of the ashes, out of tragedy, good things can happen. We are so proud of Brandon and others like him who have turned their unbelievable, unbearable pain into action.

Congressman SOTO said one of the best ways to honor the victims is through action. When we looked at the devastation 2 years ago, we started a serious conversation about how to do that.

Of course, this year is a painful time for us, for Orlando, for our Nation, for the world, for so many who grieved with us and continue to grieve with us. But as we think about action and what has happened since Pulse, I just have to mention a horrible tragedy that happened in Orlando yesterday, as we talk about gun violence and continue to work hard to turn our pain into advocacy and to legislation.

Yesterday, the Orlando Police Department responded to a domestic violence call. The suspect was a convicted domestic abuser who had been arrested several other times for felonious actions and for violating his probation, but he also had a gun.

When the officers arrived, he opened fire, hitting one officer, Officer Kevin Valencia, who had been with the department since 2016. This young officer is in his twenties, and he has a wife and two young children. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Officer Valencia, who is in critical condition, fighting for his life.

But, inside, the shooter had his partner's four young children:

Irayan was 12. She wore glasses with pink rims. She had dark, wavy hair and a bright smile. At school, she was known as an overachiever.

Lillia was 10. She was blonde and wore glasses.

Aiden was 6. He and his sister attended Sadler Elementary School, and he loved dinosaurs.

Dove was 1 year old. She loved to play outside.

Officers evacuated the apartment complex where the standoff was occurring. Neighbors stood by in parking lots, some of them in their pajamas, while the hours ticked away. But when the police entered the apartment, desperate to save lives, they found all four children dead, as well as the shooter.

As we very painfully remember the victims of Pulse, a day before the 2-year anniversary, we lost two young girls and two young boys. These children will never grow up, will never realize their full potential.

It is amazing what our children are now having to endure and having to deal with. A 10-year-old girl who lives in the area spoke to a reporter this morning, and she said: "He killed himself and killed the little kids." That is this 10-year-old girl's reality.

Gun violence kills our children. It kills our future. It breaks into our homes, our theaters, our restaurants, our nightclubs. It turns nightclubs into shooting ranges. It turns homes into battlefields. It turns schools into theaters of war at worst, prisons at best.

We have few answers at this point about what happened and why on the eve of a 2-year anniversary of Pulse, why this man, this convicted felon with a history of violence, had a gun.

We know that in more than half of our Nation's mass shootings, a family member is at least one of the victims.

We know that in nearly half of our Nation's mass shootings, there are warning signs beforehand, often violence against family members.

Let's think about it. Before a gunman in Sutherland Springs, Texas, killed 26 people, he had been convicted of domestic violence. Before a shooter tried to kill our friends and colleagues at the congressional baseball practice, he had beat his foster daughter and shot a gun at her boyfriend. Before the Sandy Hook murderer killed 20 children and six others at a Connecticut elementary school, he first killed his mother.

There are usually warning signs beforehand.

The Pulse shooting was no exception. Before the Pulse gunman murdered 49, he beat his previous wife and locked her away from her family.

The American Journal of Public Health found that having a gun in the household during a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that the abuse will turn into a homicide.

So what do we do? What do we do as we talk about the advocacy that we are so proud of that is going on in our hometown? What do we do as legislators in one of the most powerful bodies not only in our country, but in the world?

We remember our victims. We tell their stories. We grieve with their families and with the survivors.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to Congressman SOTO to continue to share his thoughts with us.

Ms. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman DEMINGS for bringing up something that I know has troubled all Orlandoans right now, which is a day before the second annual remembrance of the Pulse nightclub shooting, we had a standoff where four children were killed. It is a testament to the fact that there is so much left to be done.

Next I want to talk about Christopher Hansen. Christopher Hansen is a survivor of the Pulse nightclub shooting. That night, he personally helped save the lives of those around him by assisting injured victims.

Mr. Hansen is now a member of the Pride Fund to End Gun Violence's board of advisors. Pride Fund works towards supporting candidates on the Federal and State level who will promote gun reform and advocate for LGBTQ safety and equality. Pride Fund is currently America's only LGBTQ organization that focuses solely on gun policy reform to ensure safety for all.

Through his own recovery, Hansen has found a home in a community which he recently joined months before the shootings. He has become a spokesperson for the memory of those killed at the Pulse nightclub and a central figure of support for survivors and everyone affected by the tragedy.

In an op-ed for the Orlando Weekly, Christopher writes: "It started with an invitation. An invitation to a popular gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida: Pulse. In preparation for my night out, I decided to see a movie—'The Conjuring 2'—a horror movie based on a true story. Little did I know that I would have a night of horror of my own. And my night of painting the town red would be drenched in blood.

"Before the attack, I was having the time of my life. I was tearing up the dance floor and mingling with fellow club-goers. Then everything changed. I heard three loud booms, but I didn't think much of it. I continued dancing, thinking it was the base from the music and not the sound of gunshots. By the time I realized what was happening, screams, smoke, and flashing lights filled the club. People were rushing toward me, desperately looking for exits and places to hide. I followed the crowds and moved past the bathroom where people were hiding. I managed to get out unscathed. There was a pause in gunfire, and I was compelled to go back. Before I knew it, the gunfire started again, and I watched two men heading towards the hospital—one was shot twice. I urged his friend to keep him calm as I tried to stop the bleeding. I took my bandana off and wrapped it around one bullet wound, and pressed my hand on the other, praying he wouldn't die. I kept him level on the curb until an ambulance arrived.

"I turned and saw a girl in the grass, begging to be moved because she couldn't get up. We were told not to move her to avoid further injury, but I couldn't ignore her cries. I picked her up and her body became cold. I put her on my lap, which saved her life; she was shot in the back, and my thigh pressed against her wound. As she began to fall asleep, I slapped her face and asked her questions. Through keeping her awake, I learned her name was Kalisha, and she was a 19-year-old from Ohio."

Just 19 years old.

"A man came to me and said I saved him as well, but I didn't remember; everything became a blur.

"I wanted to help as many people as I could, but I was later told to leave since I wasn't a professionally trained paramedic. My phone died earlier that night and my wallet was still in the club. Without a way to contact loved ones or money to get home, I walked the streets of Orlando covered in blood. I feared for my life that night and felt helpless and alone. I thought about the victims who were still there and the families who would learn their loved ones never made it home.

"That night, I met the mother of a victim I had seen hiding in the bathroom. She showed me his frantic text messages. His name was Eddie Justice, and he was killed in that very bathroom. The girls I met that night, Akyra Murray, Tiara Parker, and Patience Carter, were hiding in the same bathroom—all three had been shot.

Akyra, who just graduated from high school and was ready to attend Mercyhurst University in the fall on a basketball scholarship, had died. At 18 years old, she was the youngest Pulse victim."

18 years old. We lost her.

□ 2000

"Her life was drastically cut short due to gun violence and someone with easy access to military-style assault weapons.

"Forty-nine people lost their lives that night, and another 38,000 will lose their life this year to senseless gun violence. I've joined Pride Fund's Board of Advisors so I can be a voice for the survivors and victims of Pulse, Las Vegas, and every shooting to come.

"Pride Fund's mission to save lives starts by supporting candidates on the Federal and State level who will act on sensible gun reform and champion for LGBTQ safety and equality. Pride Fund and I are turning tragedy into action"—they are also honoring these victims with action—"through a focus on commonsense gun reforms like enacting background checks, limiting ammunition sales, and preventing those convicted of hate crimes from purchasing guns.

"Members of Congress, reluctant as they are to cross the NRA, can effect change. They can address the easy access to assault weapons, large-capacity magazines, and ammunition sales. They can address our safety, rather than focusing instead on the safety of their own seats, courtesy of NRA cash. "If Members of Congress won't prioritize our safety, then we have the power to find those that will."

Those are powerful words by Christopher Hansen of the Orlando Weekly, so I want to take a few minutes about action.

First, I want to talk about gun reform actions and lack of actions on the Federal and on the State level. On the Federal level, we have had some reforms actually pass this past year. In the omnibus, we saw that the CDC can now study gun violence, even though they are not allowed to take any positions or say anything that would be deemed to promote or to advocate against gun violence.

We had a Fix NICS bill that will ensure that our agencies are getting the information about those who have been convicted of crimes or those who may be ineligible for other reasons into the background check system earlier, so that those background checks will be more accurate. We even see rule-making to potentially ban bump stocks which were used in the Las Vegas shooting.

But the list is short of action that has been taken by this Congress, and the list of unfinished business is long.

First, is the failure to even give a hearing on re-instituting the Federal assault weapon ban. I say re-instituting because many people forget, from 1994 to 2004, we had such a ban.

During that time, people's Second Amendment rights were still in effect; but we banned weapons that have no civilian use whatsoever. And we saw, during that period, the statistics bear out, because when you look at gun violence and mass shootings at that time, I challenge anybody watching this tonight across America to recall whether they remember during that time the number of mass shootings, the number of deaths during the assault weapons ban.

Then we look at 2004-2014, the number of incidents tripled. The number of deaths tripled. And that is just to 2014, not including Charleston or Vegas or the Pulse nightclub shooting or recently, in Parkland.

We also see universal background checks still not fixed. Ninety percent of Americans support this. Ninety percent of Americans support that there should no longer be loopholes in our universal background checks.

That you could easily, right now, sell in a gun show without any background check; this makes no sense. You could sell in a private sale without a background check; this makes no sense. This is an easy way for people who are wholly ineligible to be able to buy guns every day in every State.

And so what is the purpose of fixing our Fix NICS bill and having better background checks, if these giant loopholes that swallow the whole?

Also, these extended magazine clips. The reason people heard 45 to 50 shots fired in a minute is because of these extended magazines and these assault weapons. When you have a shotgun, when you have a handgun—and I will let Congresswoman VAL DEMINGS talk a little bit more with her background in law enforcement—yes, you can hurt people. But you can't do the kind of carnage we have seen with these assault weapons. And I look forward to hearing your opinions on that Congresswoman DEMINGS.

I also want to talk about gun reform on the State level. We had some victories, we had some defeats. After fighting to keep guns out of teachers' hands in schools, that battle was lost; while we have been able to prevent them from being on college campuses.

But we did have some positives, and I give 100 percent of the credit to the victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting and the victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting, who stood hand in hand and went up to Tallahassee to advocate for greater gun safety. And I could say, having survived nearly 10 years in the Florida Legislature, it is not a welcome place for a lot of these reforms.

But they had some great reforms passed. They raised the age to purchase firearms from 18 to 21. They banned bump stocks—which, President Trump, it is time to follow suit like they did in Florida. Attorney General Sessions, it is time to get those rules in place.

They also were able to harden our schools. Now that is something that I

was remiss before to not mention. We did have the Safe Schools Act to help harden our schools.

They also created critical red flag legislation that allows our law enforcement—and I look forward to your comments on this as well, from your background, Congresswoman Demings—to allow law enforcement officers who are on the scene and see that someone will be a danger to others, to be able to take away their guns for a limited time period and then to be able to go and request a judge to get it back. We do this in domestic violence, as you are familiar with.

So these are things that actually have happened in Florida that are moving the ball forward. And if it can happen in our State, that has been so protective of some of these critical reforms, I believe it can happen, both on the Federal level and that Republicans and Democrats can join together for these reforms.

But the last thing I want to talk about, but not least, are first responders, because you can't talk about action without talking about our first responders. The brave men and women of the Orlando Police Department that you had the honor of being chief of, Congresswoman DEMINGS; the brave men and women of the Orange County Sheriff's Office, which your husband is our honorable sheriff of; our Orlando and our Orange County Fire Department who were on the scene, along with our EMTs, to give lifesaving aid to 68 injured people and try to save some of those 49 we lost.

We have had some action to help out our first responders, too. Our UCF Restores program, which helps with PTSD for firefighters, law enforcement, and our military, immerses these heroes into virtual reality so that they can, unfortunately, have to relive those experiences, but then meet with a psychologist or a psychiatrist to talk about that, to bring up these repressed memories. And we have had tremendous success. We have had tremendous feedback from our local fire departments, from our local law enforcement, and from our military.

We are able to work together, you and I and Congresswoman MURPHY, to get \$4 million in our Federal budget and open up more of this treatment, not only to our military, but to victims of sexual assault in this recent National Defense Authorization Act bill.

We also saw, and I will let you expound on this more, anti-terrorism dollars finally come back down to Orlando, that you led the charge on. And thank you for that, Congresswoman DEMINGS, for doing that, from your perch helping out with homeland security and being our expert on security and on antiterrorism, protecting the homeland.

And then, finally, I want to end this part of our section by talking about the advancements in our pension system in Florida to help out our first responders. Your husband was a leader, is

a leader, but was a leader in the State Legislature, as Sheriff, to help with the Adam Pierce Act, which made sure that our fallen law enforcement who were paralyzed but still wanted to work, wouldn't lose their pensions because they want to do some administrative work and want to still be involved and want to go to work every day and do their part for justice. And that was a bill that your husband spearheaded through, and I remember.

We also had an amendment of my bill onto that bill; you may or may not recall, and the Sheriff was really nice to allow us to do it along with law enforcement, to help our firefighters.

There was a loophole where, if our firefighters died in training exercises, they would get nothing. They would get no death benefit for their families. They wouldn't get the healthcare benefit. They would be left with nothing because of this loophole.

And John C. Curry, Mr. Begg, and Mr. Mickle from Osceola County, John Curry, from Volusia County, they, respectively, were able to get relief because we made it retrospective.

Then finally, we were able to, after we lost Deputy Pine in Orange County, with Sheriff Jerry Demings helping us lead the way, made sure that first responders who died in the line of duty didn't get 50 percent of their pension. They weren't half heroes. They now get 100 percent of their pension for their families, because they are 100 percent heroes and they gave 100 percent of their life and put 100 percent of their courage and their life on the line. And, at the very least, their families can be taken care of when they are no longer with us.

So there is a lot that we have honored with action over the years, both before and after Pulse. But there is a lot more to go, and I look forward to hearing your comments on that, Congresswoman DEMINGS.

And thank you again for your service as our Orlando chief. And I know that there is a lot that you could bring to this conversation that we are continuing on with based upon your rich experience in these fields.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Congressman SOTO, I want to thank you so much for several things that you've talked about.

First of all, your recognition of our first responders, our brave police officers and firefighters and the absolutely amazing job that they do, not just in Orlando, but across the Nation, to keep, as you put it, our homeland safe.

When you think about it, our first responders get called to every tragedy. I heard someone once say that—I believe it was Chief David Brown, former Chief David Brown in Dallas, Texas who said that every time society fails or something goes wrong, law enforcement's called in to deal with it, to fix it. So thank you for your recognition of them.

We lost four law enforcement officers in the line of duty last year. And we have one, as you heard me mention

earlier, Officer Valencia, who is in the hospital fighting for his life.

I also thank you for the beginning comments when you talked about the bravery of some of the survivors at the Pulse nightclub, those who did what they could to shield others from harm, to help others get to places of safety.

But also, I think the elephant in the room are the giant loopholes that you spoke about. When we share the stories of the Pulse victims, it is impossible to separate those stories from the discussion of gun violence in this country. The two are certainly intertwined, and we cannot discuss one without discussing the other.

As we remember the lives of these 49 victims, and countless others throughout the great Nation that we serve, I am reminded that every American should have the right to go to school or church or a mall, synagogue, a movie theater or a nightclub without being brutally murdered or wounded by someone with a gun.

□ 2015

You have reminded me, Congressman SOTO, that our job as legislators is to create laws that allow Americans to live their lives in safety and security. Two years after Pulse, we have not done that job, and you so clearly pointed that out in your comments.

We have not closed the loopholes that allow disturbed people to buy a gun without a background check, even though we represent Americans and 97 percent of Americans support that idea.

We have not implemented universal background checks while we represent Americans, although 83 percent of Americans support universal background checks.

We have not banned assault weapons like the one that was used to take so many lives in the Pulse shooting, the Las Vegas shooting, the Parkland shooting, and so many others, while 67 percent of Americans support banning assault weapons.

The gentleman talked earlier about what those weapons were designed to do. I spent 27 years in law enforcement. I can tell you that they were designed for the battlefield. Persons shot by assault weapons, the chances of survival are greatly diminished.

They were not designed for the streets of our neighborhoods and in our communities and in our school campuses and at our churches and in our movie theaters and other places that are designated safe places.

No, we have not banned bump stocks. What sense does it make to say that automatic weapons are illegal, but allow individuals to go out and, for less than \$200, purchase a device that will take your semiautomatic weapon and make it function like an automatic weapon?

As the gentleman mentioned earlier, no, we have not fully empowered law enforcement to better protect our families by allowing them to temporarily remove guns from troubled individuals.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years after Pulse is more than 2 years too late, but the time is always right. I believe Dr. King said this, to do what is right.

Instead of responding to mass shootings where police officers are shot in the head, and children are killed and other innocent people, we should work to prevent them. As a police chief, my goal was to stop violence from occurring in the first place. We, as Members of Congress, have the ability to do that.

Congress has acted on this issue before. We passed the National Firearms Act of, gosh, 1934; the Gun Control Act of 1968; the Gun-Free Schools Act; the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act; and the Federal assault weapons bans. These were bipartisan efforts that saved lives.

Where is the legislative response to the Pulse shooting 2 years later? Where is the legislative response to the Parkland shooting?

I urge my colleagues, my friends, let's do our job and make schools and theaters and nightclubs of our country truly safe.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida has 12 minutes remaining.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight to honor the victims of Pulse. They deserve to be remembered. Their families deserve recognition, and they also deserve action. The men, the women, the mothers, the fathers, the sons and daughters, the brothers and sisters gunned down in our country deserve remembrance.

They also deserve courage from their leaders. They deserve action from us.

As we utilize the last, I guess, 11 minutes now, I will yield to Congressman SOTO to just kind of wrap up his thoughts and leave with us some words that, hopefully, will carry us to the right direction.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Congresswoman for yielding. Of course, at the end of this, I am going to give the gentlewoman the last word, if that is okay with her.

So it has been a busy last couple of days as we pay tribute to the second annual remembrance of the Pulse nightclub shooting. This weekend, I got to go to PrideFest Kissimmee, and there is much to be proud about in Kissimmee. We actually have a human rights ordinance in Kissimmee County and Osceola County.

People in Orange and Osceola can't be fired if they are gay or lesbian, bisexual or transgender. But in a third county I represent, Polk County, they still can be. In fact, there is a community called Poinciana that is in both counties. If you live on the east side of Poinciana, you have rights. If you live on the west side, you still do not.

We also have now the Zebra Coalition that works with LGBT youth who are subject to bullying and can be intimidated. We are about to get the center

in Kissimmee as well to be a beacon of services and of hope, a safe place in a county that welcomes inclusiveness.

I also got to go to the 49 Fund scholarship ceremony where we saw LGBT youth be awarded scholarships. These are the future leaders who talk about how they are going to lead in LGBT rights, lead in gun safety reform. But I believe education is the seed of hope to stop this hate from happening in the future, and the future is bright.

We also had Congressman MARK TAKANO come down to visit with us, the co-chair of the LGBT caucus, for an LGBTQ roundtable. We heard about how HIV funds are being cut in Florida because Federal funds are being cut, even though our State trades off with being the number one State for new HIV contraction. So this is an issue that is affecting us.

We heard there about how these transgender school guidelines were one of the first things that the Trump administration took out, which is now leading schools to uncertainty in how they have to protect these vulnerable kids.

Also, we heard even about some of the things that we take for granted, like that we are going to be having, through Zebra Coalition, an LGBTQ prom, because a lot of these kids, they get outcast in high school, and we want it to be an inclusive community. We are an inclusive community.

We also visited the Pulse nightclub memorial with Barbara Poma, and we watched the photos of grief. We looked at the names. We signed in and took our pilgrimage.

We went to the GLBT Center and heard about them coordinating services on that day and afterward, about the outpouring of love and supplies, and folks coming in to ask what they could do to help.

Then last night, we had the rally against gun violence. It rained the whole time, but people's spirits were up. This was the neatest point: It ended with an actual rainbow. Because the sun came out, a rainbow came down. It was right after our prayer, so I believe God was watching and gave us a sign with a rainbow at the end of that.

Then the Orange County Historical Museum this morning, as we saw in the photographs, we saw the memorabilia and more quilts than I have ever seen in my life, beautiful, colored tapestries, pictures of so many of our friends who fought side by side, and memorialized this great tragedy.

Lastly, we were at First United Methodist Church. The gentlewoman and I got to participate in that this morning, where we heard the 49 bells with each of the victim's names being discussed, being memorialized.

So I am going to leave it back to the gentlewoman and say it was an honor to be able to be there this morning, to hear the ringing of the 49 bells for our 49 victims, and we will never forget. I thank Congresswoman DEMINGS for spending this time with me.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, 49 bells to represent 49 people. Our community declared June 12 to be Orlando United Day, a day of love and kindness.

Today, we take time to remember the 49 angels and all of those who still carry physical and mental wounds from that day, 2 years after the attack.

I believe, Congressman SOTO, more strongly than ever, that love will win. While the pain will never go away, I do believe that we have an obligation to turn our pain into action. We will not forget those who lost their lives.

I am proud to represent a community that has acted with such incredible strength and love. I am proud to continue to honor these men and women, not only through our words, but through our actions. I am also proud to be joined by Congressman SOTO, and I thank the gentleman for his unwavering commitment and dedication to protecting our homeland, and his commitment to creating and passing meaningful legislation to keep guns out of the hands of bad people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his advocacy and his leadership on this issue, and I thank him for joining me in this day of remembrance.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2851, STOP THE IMPORTATION AND TRAFFICKING OF SYNTHETIC ANALOGUES ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5735, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR RECOVERY IN VIABLE ENVIRONMENTS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5788, SECURING THE INTERNATIONAL MAIL AGAINST OPIOIDS ACT OF 2018

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-751) on the resolution (H. Res. 934) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2851) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to clarify how controlled substance analogues are to be regulated, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5735) to amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 to establish a demonstration program to set aside section 8 housing vouchers for supportive and transitional housing for individuals recovering from opioid use disorders or other substance use disorders, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5788) to provide for the processing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection of certain international mail shipments and to require the provision of advance electronic information on international mail shipments of mail, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN OUR ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, this is actually one of those sort of joyful moments that we finally get a chance to come up here, and we don't very often get to do that.

We are going to have a discussion of what is happening in our economy, in our society for both our friends on the left and those of us on the right, the love of people, and the fact that they have opportunity.

When you look at the unemployment statistics, when you actually take a look at how many of our brothers and sisters are moving back into the workforce, the income, and the closing of income inequality, there are wonderful things happening out there.

The neat thing tonight, we are going to bring a number of Members from different parts of the country, particularly in the West, and we are going to talk about what they are seeing happening in their region. We are going to talk also about a little bit of the data and a handful of fairly interesting things that I am actually excited about.

So, first, I yield to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and give him an opportunity to talk about what is happening in his State.

□ 2030

Mr. GIANFORTE. I thank the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Speaker, for leading this effort. It is a pleasure for me to share with this body the benefits Montanans are seeing from tax reform.

It has been 6 months since President Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act into law, and we are already seeing the results. The benefits of the tax cuts are not a theory. I see it when I meet with Montanans throughout the State.

Paychecks are growing. Montana businesses are making investments and creating jobs. In fact, since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was signed into law, 1 million new jobs have been created. The national unemployment rate matches the 49-year low, and Montanans' unemployment rate has dropped. America's economic growth is exceeding expectations.

Hardworking Montanans across the State, whether at the UPS facility in Missoula, at Big Sky Wholesale Seeds in Shelby, or at the Billings Flying